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ABSTRACT

This model proposes the TAP Team approach as an on-site delivery system for local school staff development in large, urban school systems. TAP emphasizes in-service training for both upgrading skills of staff and for helping staff acquire new skills in the areas of coping strategies, classroom management, communication skills, instructional methodologies, decision-making processes, motivational techniques, leadership styles and multi-cultural understanding. The TAP Team: (1) consists of a staff development specialist from the local school system and a university-level educational psychologist; (2) draws upon resources from both the local school system and the university serving that school system's personnel; and (3) works with the school principal to initiate activities culminating in the creation of the School Leadership Team, which is a vehicle for needs identification, planning, implementation and evaluation. (RF)

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THE UTILIZATION OF PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN A LARGE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM: A STAFF DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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A presentation delivered at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association in Atlanta, Georgia on March 22, 1978

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THE UTILIZATION OF PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN LARGE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM: A STAFF DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

James L. Stone, Jr.

Educators in Michigan speak of tenured teachers with twelve (12) years professional experience having their employment terminated. The Jefferson County Public Schools of Louisville, Kentucky have eliminated in excess of 700 teaching positions in the last two years. Seniority is the paramount criterion as RIF - Reduction in force - continues as a consequence of declining enrollments and fiscal limitations faced by school districts across the nation.

As teachers, administrators, and Boards of Education seek to deal equitably with a situation having few, if any, precedents seniority and certification appear to be the most widely employed criteria for determining who stays and who leaves - the school system. While certification is normally a consideration, certification categories are usually of such wide scope that, as a practical matter, seniority is the over-riding question. This has obvious consequences for teachers and administrators. Central office and local school leadership must be reexamined in light of the availability of fewer supervisory personnel and the shifting teacher population. Teachers are finding themselves in areas either totally lacking in familiarity or so removed by time as to have little, if any, constructive influence. Teachers are in new areas, new roles, new subjects - and in many cases - with new students in new schools.

Teachers with elementary certification who have many years of experience - perhaps the same experience - in the intermediate grades are finding themselves in primary grades - forcing out their less senior colleagues at that level. Secondary teachers with a high subject

matter orientation are finding themselves in middle schools- if not negative at least bewildered by the concept of the school in the middle and this person labeled the "transescient." Additionally, the Physical Education major may find themselves teaching a course quite foreign to the focus of their formalized training, and experience, and interests through no fault of their own as they are "endorsed" for such under state certification. The English major, after teaching literature in the college prep program quite successfully for years, may find themselves teaching ninth grade remedial reading. And the list could - and indeed does- go on and on.

Equally obvious are the implications for continuing teacher - and administrator - education programs. Individuals are finding themselves in roles for which either (1) they were not adequately trained in or (2) for which they have received no training. Therefore, in-service must address the need for (a) upgrading skills of staff and (b) acquisition of new skills. Such skill development or acquisition requires the development of new delivery systems for staff development and a new consciousness of job stress experienced by those to be the recipients of our training efforts.

A model which I wish to propose for consideration is one which addresses the discrepancy between theory and practice - real or imagined though the dicotomy may be - and the relative resources of theoreticians and practitioneers. This model has proven successful in providing on-site local school staff development activities in the Middle Schools of Jefferson County Kentucky. The TAP Team model essentially does precisely what the name implies - another first for educational jargon! The TAP

Team brings together a Staff Development Specialist and a University Professor as facilitators of training identified and implemented on-site at the local school.

The complexity of urban school staff development is compounded by the size of the task as well as such factors as the diversity of student - and staff- populations, the wide range of achievement levels, and the maintenance of student discipline. Add one other factor which consistently confronts those concerned with the provision of meaningful staff development - the question of "when?" - accessability of the intended training.

A partial listing of areas of staff development resulting from these perceived and real needs would include the following:

Coping Strategies
Classroom Management
Communications Skills
Instructional Methodologies
Multi-cultural Understandings
Leadership Styles
Motivational Techniques
Decision-making Processes

Included in such a listing is the apparent need to draw upon resources from the local school system and from the universities serving that schoo system's personnel. There is a need for collaborative efforts, maximizing all available resources, to address questions involving theoretical constructs and real-life "givens" of urban schooling to attain the application of skills in the classroom and in the school office.

The TAP Team consists of a Theoretician and a Practitioneer, the former from a university and the latter from a school system. The former quite logically in many cases being the Educational Psychologist. Individually and apart each is lacking in providing the assistance needed. Collectively,

as a team, they provide the professional expertise, credibility, and backgrounds essential for acceptance in the schools as well as for attainment of training objectives.

Ideally, the School System TAP Team member has established rapport with the school staff and faculty prior to formation of the team. This individual must be one with a proven record as a classroom teacher and instructional specialist.

The Unviersity TAP Team member must be a blending of highly trained specialist and reality-based service orientation. The Educational Psychologist brings unique knowledge and skills to such a team which are clearly identifiable as pertinent and useful to the intended participants in the staff development activities.

While the Team arrives at the local school prepared to serve as a resource or identifier of resources, the TAP Team does not arrive (a) with all the answers, nor (b) with none of the answers. The former position is quite familiar to educators of the late sixties and early seventies. The latter, however, is in need of acceptance - especially by university personnel. School staffs are as turned -off by "You tell us what you want us to do" - with no paramaters identified - as they are with "my research has justified my hypothesis that this is the answer to your school's problems."

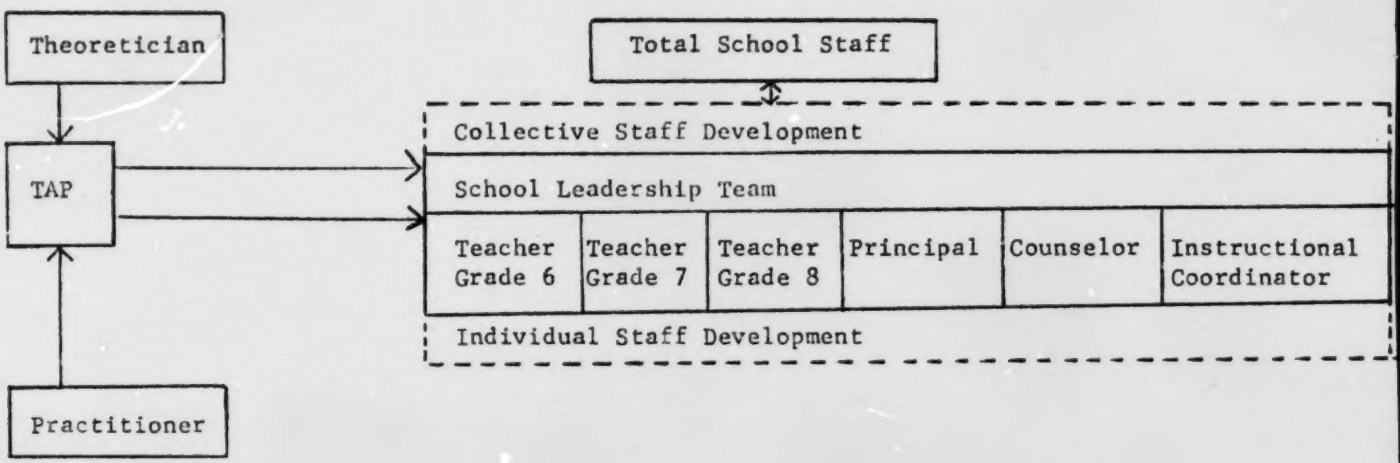
The TAP Team should arrive at schools prepared and possessing leadership team-building skills, decision-making skills, assessment skills, and options - a laundry list if you will of possible areas to be covered and resources available. The Team does not, of course, act

in isolation. The Team, working with the school principal, initiates the activities culminating in the creation of the School Leadership Team. The Leadership Team is the vehicle for: needs identification, planning, problem implementation, and evaluation.

Characteristically, the School Leadership Team consists of the Principal, the Counselor, Teachers Representative of the grade levels (or "years") in the school, and the school's Instructional Coordinator. This increases the likelihood that all constituents of the school are represented and promotes local ownership in the staff development experiences.

The delivery system at a local school site is as varied as the nature of the topics to be addressed, the personalities involved, and the unique character of a given school. The composition of the school staff, the style of the school leader, and the availability of and acceptance by school staff - are but a few significant variables. Should the school have an Instructional Coordinator, the involvement of school staff during the normal school day and the application of skills in the classroom are greatly facilitated. The Instructional Coordinator is yet another model of staff development and local school follow-up support services designed to operationalize the concept of clinical supervision. This model also requires the collaborative efforts of University and School System to adequately address staff development needs in urban school districts.

As critics attack, with some measure of justification, the unilateral staff development efforts of University Professors, School Administrators, and Teacher Organizations, it may well be time to renew a commitment to collaboration in meeting the needs of practitioneers in today's schools. The maximal utilization of all resources will be needed to provide the essential continuous professional development of School and University Personnel.



TAP MODEL

Facilitation of Local School Staff Development